

**Factors Affecting Students' Difficulties in Speaking Performance of The  
Tenth Grade Students of SMA Negeri 1 Tiworo Kepulauan**

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**Abstract**

Students' speaking performance could be affected by factors that come from performance conditions (time pressure, planning, standard of performance and amount of support), affective factors (such as motivation, confidence and anxiety), listening ability, topical knowledge and feedback during speaking activities. The purpose of this study was to analyze, describe and determine factors affecting students' difficulties in speaking performance of the tenth-grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Tiworo Kepulauan. This study employed quantitative design in the form of survey. The samples were 30 students of X MIA 2 which were taken by using random sampling. The data were collected by using close ended questionnaire and were analyzed by using SPSS version 16. The results of this research showed that of the three factors affecting students' difficulties in speaking, the highest percentage was linguistic factors including grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. It was concluded that the students got difficulties in performing speaking task.

*Keywords: Speaking Performance, Students' Difficulties*

**Introduction**

Speaking has been considered as one of the most difficult skill in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Some difficulties in learning speaking are pronunciation, grammar, listening, and even self-confidence. Shumin (2017) states that learning to speak English as a foreign language more than knowing its grammatical and semantic rules. The learners must get knowledge of how native speakers use the language in every context. Therefore, English teachers should provide good source of how native speakers use the language in communication context for teaching in EFL classroom.

Hosni (2014); Shumin (2017); Tuan & Mai (2015) inclined that age, listening comprehension, cultural characteristic and affective factors may affect EFL learners to speak. The students who are exposed to English earlier are predicted to be able to pronounce words more accurately than the others. In relation to listening comprehension, when we are speaking, our listening must be good to be able to respond to the conversation. With regard to cultural characteristic, if one's opinion about the culture of the language is good, it may be easier for him/her to understand the language itself. Affective factors are related to emotions, self-esteem, empathy, anxiety, attitude, and motivation. Those factors are psychologically influential in speaking because they are related to self-confidence to help EFL learners in speaking.

The source of information is the most influential factor to EFL learners' speaking competence. Studies about factors affecting Indonesian learners speaking competence found that teaching students to speak English might become a problem for some EFL teachers. Thus, teachers have to help their students to speak English to become competent speaker.

Al-Seghayer (2014) who examined the most common difficulties of EFL learners found that English learners receive low exposure to communicative situations, in turn, lead to poor results of the overall teaching-learning activities. Speaking is not easy for all EFL learners. Not all language learners who studied English after many years can communicate fluently and accurately because they lack of language exposure and knowledge of language use.

Based on researcher's interview to the English teacher at SMA Negeri 1 Tiworo Kepulauan, the teacher indicated that several problems occurred during learning English especially learning to speak which were caused by lack of vocabulary, limited self-confidence to express their idea in front of the class because of being afraid of making mistake when pronouncing words or arranging sentences. Based on the students' score in report cards, there were sixty percent students of X MIA 2 who were

difficult to speak English. Therefore, the researcher was interested to conduct a research entitled "Factors affecting students' difficulties in speaking performance of the tenth-grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Tiworo Kepulauan".

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### *Factors Affecting Speaking Performance*

Tuan & Mai (2015) points out that students' speaking performance can be affected by the factors that come from performance conditions (time pressure, planning, standard of performance and amount of support), affective factors (such as motivation, confidence and anxiety), listening ability, topical knowledge and feedback during speaking activities.

The first is performance condition. According to Nation & Newton (2009) as cited in Tuan & Mai (2015), performance conditions (time pressure, planning, standard of performance and amount of support) can affect students' speaking performance.

The second is affective factors. Krashen (1982) as cited in Tuan & Mai (2015) states that a variety of affective variables have been confirmed to be related to the success in second language acquisition in research over the last decade but most of those studies examined three categories: motivation, self-confidence and anxiety.

The third is listening ability. Speaking skills cannot be developed unless we develop listening skills (Doff, 1998 as cited in Tuan & Mai, 2015). Students must understand what is said to them to have a successful conversation.

The fourth is topical knowledge. According to Bachman & Palmer (1996) as cited in Tuan & Mai (2015) topical knowledge is defined as knowledge structures in long-term memory.

The fifth is feedback during speaking class. Most students want and expect their teachers to give them feedback on their performance. They suggest that the teachers should always correct the students' mistakes

positively and with encouragement (Baker & Westrup, 2003 as cited in Tuan & Mai, 2015).

#### Factors Influencing Learners' Speaking Competence

Clement and Kruidenier (1983) asserted that the factors influencing learners' speaking competence are cognitive factors, linguistic factors and affective factors. According to Levelt (1989), cognitive factors include conceptualization, formulation and articulation. Linguistic factors are related to the students' knowledge of the language that hampers the students to speak English. Affective factors deal with anxiety and self-restriction. Anxiety is the affective factor that "most pervasively obstructs the learning process" (Harmer, 2007).

#### *Previous Studies*

Tuan and Mai (2015) who conducted a study on Vietnamese EFL learners speaking performance found that there were many factors affecting students speaking performance namely: (1) topical knowledge; (2) listening ability; (3) motivation to speak; (4) teachers' feedback during speaking activities; (5) confidence; (6) pressure to perform well and (7) time for preparation.

Al Hosni (2014) investigated speaking difficulties encountered by young EFL learners. His study revealed that the main speaking difficulties encountered by grade 5 students were linguistic difficulties, mother tongue use, and inhibition. Students were unable to speak in English because they have lack of vocabulary and grammar structures. They also have lack of sentence formation skills which result in using mother tongue. Students also think that making mistakes when speaking in front of their classmates would embarrass them. Consequently, they prefer to keep silent to avoid such situations.

#### **Method**

This study used quantitative design in the form of survey to find out factors affecting students' difficulties in speaking performance. The

population of this study was the tenth-grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Tiworo Kepulauan in academic year 2016/2017 which consisted of 214 students. The sample of this was class 10 MIA 2.

Questionnaire was used to collect data which consisted of 20 close-ended questions. Before conducting the study, the researcher piloted the questionnaires in class 10 MIA 3 on 18<sup>th</sup> of April, 2018. The result of validity test showed that there were 6 invalid items (Q1, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q15, and Q16) which should be removed and the score of reliability questionnaire was 0,835 which categorized as "very high". The collected data were analyzed by calculating descriptive statistical analysis.

## Findings

### *The Result of Affective Factors*

The following figure describes the result of questionnaire dealing with affective factors.

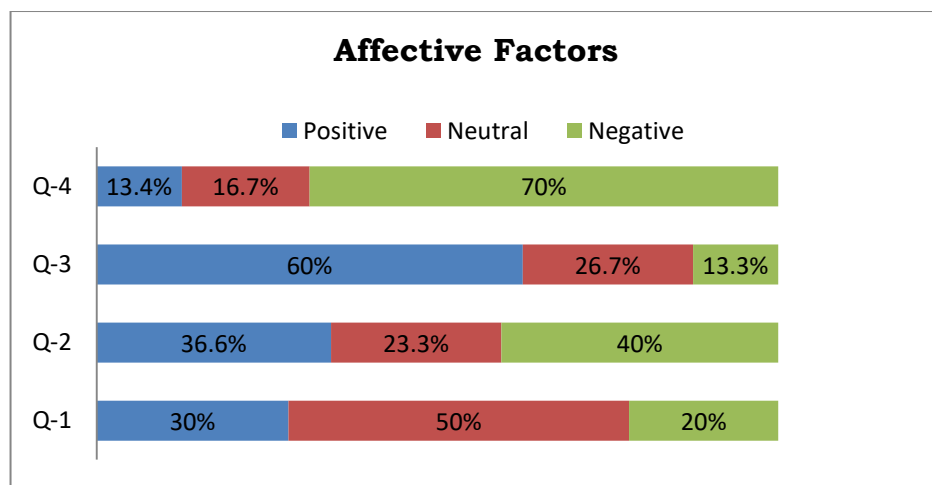


Figure 1. Factors related to affective

Based on the figure above, about 50% students had neutral argument that they were too shy to speak English (Q1). Then, most of the students (40%) disagree with statement that they were afraid to speak in front of their friends (Q2). About 60.0% of them agree that they lost their self-confidence when they made mistakes and their friends corrected their English (Q3). Last, most of students (70%) disagreed to the item that

students did not feel frustrated to practice speaking English with friends whose English ability is below them (Q4).

#### The Result of Linguistic Factors

The following figure describes the result of questionnaire dealing with affective factors.

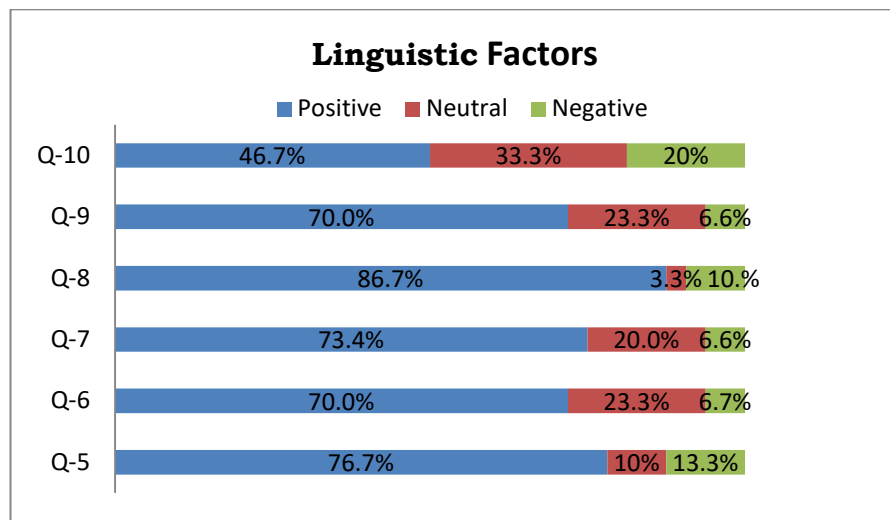


Figure 2. Factors related to linguistic

The table above shows that 76.7% of the students agreed with item Q5 stating that the students got difficulty to pronounce some words correctly because of limited pronunciation knowledge. Then, majority of them (70.0%) felt difficult in speaking English because of limited vocabulary (Q6). Next, there were 73.4% of the students agreed if they got difficulty in speaking English because of limited understanding in grammar (Q7). After that, most of the students (86.7%) agreed that they got difficulty to speak English in complete sentences (Q8). Then, 70% of the students agreed if they speak slowly because they always translate from Indonesian to English before speaking (Q9). Last, about 46.7% of students chose positive perception if they got difficulty to speak English with the correct intonation (Q10).

#### The Result of Performance Condition Factors

The following figure describes the result of questionnaire dealing with performance condition factors.

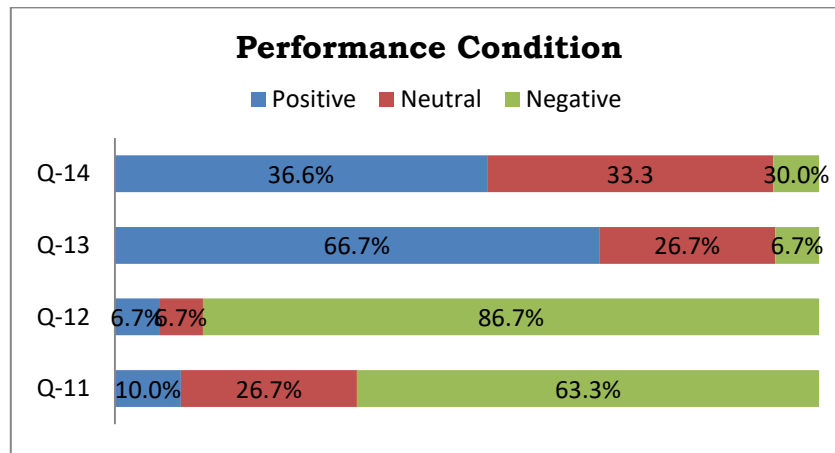


Figure 3. Factors related to performance condition

The table above showed that there were 63.3% of the students disagreed to Q11 that they were given plenty of time to speak English in front of the class by the teacher. Then, there were 86.7% of the students disagreed with Q12 that in speaking class, their teacher correct their mistake while they are speaking English. Next, 66.7% agree with Q13 stating that the students stopped speaking English in front of the class when they cannot clearly express their ideas. Last, 38.7% of students agree if they do not continue their speech if their friends laugh at while they are speaking (Q14).

Detail information about students' difficulties in speaking performance can be seen in the following graph:

*The Result of Percentage Distribution of Students' Difficulties in Speaking Performance*

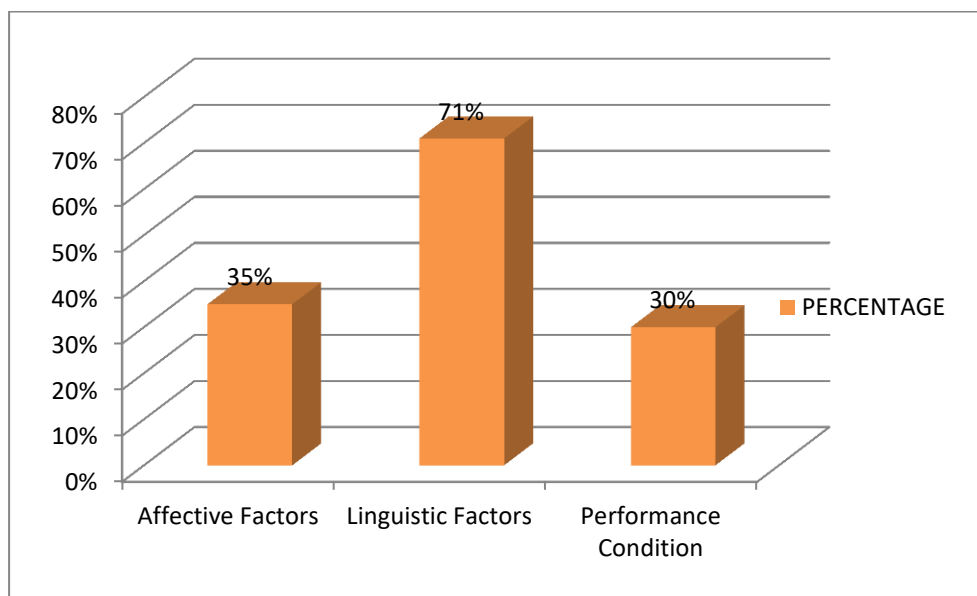


Figure 4. Factors affecting students' difficulties in speaking

From the chart above, we can conclude that the dominant category of factors affecting student' difficulties in speaking performance was linguistic factors (71%). The second was affective factors (35%) and the last was performance condition (30%).

### Discussion

There were three factors that affect students' difficulty in speaking performance namely affective factors, linguistic factors and performance condition. Based on the findings, the highest percentage was linguistic factors. Based on the result, the accumulated value of students showing agreement was 71% for linguistic factors, 35% for affective factors and 30% for performance condition. Linguistics factors include pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar (Burns and Joyce, 1997 as cited in Hosni, 2014).

Based on the result of factors affecting students' difficulties in speaking performance, it was found that majority of participants felt difficult to speak English in complete sentences. It has been proven by Q8 of the questionnaire, where 86.7% students agreed with the statement. Meanwhile, a large number of students were positive that they got difficulty to pronounce some words correctly because of limited



knowledge in pronunciation. It has been proven in the Q5 of the questionnaire, where 76.7% students were positive with this statement. With regard to grammar, students were difficult to speak English because of limited understanding of grammar. It has been proven in the Q7 of the questionnaire, where 73.4% students were positive with this statement. Meanwhile, a large number of students were positive that they got difficulty in speaking English because of limited vocabulary, as can be seen in Q6 where 70% were positive with this statement. Moreover, as can be seen in Q9 70% students were positive with that statement that they speak slowly because they always translate from Indonesian to English before speaking English. Then, Q10 showing that students got difficulty to speak English with correct intonation, where 46.7% of them were positive with this statement.

Furthermore, questionnaire result also showed that in speaking class most of students were anxious, have low self-confidence and motivation. Krashen (1982) states that affective variables are found to be related to the success of second language acquisition, but, most research over the last decade examined three categories, namely motivation, self-confidence and anxiety (as cited in Tuan & Mai 2015). The result could be seen in Q4 where the students did not feel frustrated to practice speaking English with friend whose English ability is below them. We can also see in Q3, where the students responded this item positively where they agreed that they lost self-confidence when they make mistake and their friends correct their English. Then, Q2 refers to the statement that the students were afraid of speaking in front of their friends because they think that their friends will not understand their pronunciation.

From the result, performance condition becomes the last factor in factors affecting students' difficulties in speaking performance in SMA Negeri 1 Tiworo Kepulauan. It was provided in statement Q12 that there were 86.7% agreed if they make mistake while they are speaking English in front of the class, the teacher corrects their mistake. It was also supported by Q11 where most of the students (63.3%) responded negatively the

statement that the students were given plenty of time to speak English in front of the class.

### Conclusion

There were three factors (affective factors, linguistic factors and performance condition) affecting students' speaking performance in SMA Negeri 1 Tiworo Kepulauan. Based on the result of the close-ended questionnaire, it can be concluded that the highest percentage of factors dealing with students' difficulties in speaking performance was linguistic factors.

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